



INL Associate Lab Director Phillip Finck addresses participants at the recent 2008 Verification and Validation workshop for Nuclear Systems Analysis.

INL experts teach importance of safety and validation

by Megan Crepeau, *Nuclear Science & Technology Communications*

Scientists and engineers from 20 countries converged on Idaho Falls July 21-25 to discuss better ways to achieve one of nuclear energy's most important goals: the safety and dependability of nuclear reactors.

The 2008 Verification and Validation for Nuclear Systems Analysis Workshop featured expert guest speakers, recreational activities and opportunities for attendees to collaborate with their fellow scientists. According to Technical Program Chair Kim Mousseau, the event was a great success.

"This V and V was more successful than any of us dreamed was possible in the five months we had to prepare," she said. "We had over 200 national and international speakers and participants. This is a huge win for both the participants and the co-sponsors of the workshop."

Participants agreed.

"I've certainly learned a lot about the methodology and the process for verification and validation," said University of Michigan nuclear engineering professor William Martin. "I've met a lot of people in the field and [I have] a feeling for where things are going."

Verification and Validation is a twofold process that ensures that a product not only complies with intended specifications but also operates to adequately fulfill its purpose. V and V, as it is called, is important in every industry but the July workshop marked the first large gathering of nuclear engineers to discuss the subject.

Participants were kept busy with workshops and speakers scheduled from morning to night. Many lecturers were from INL and DOE, including INL Fellow Dave Petti and Alex Larzelere, who heads DOE's advanced modeling and simulation effort.

One guest speaker was an especially rare opportunity for workshop participants to hear: nuclear pioneer Warren Nyer spoke at a special luncheon July 24. Nyer is one of the last surviving people who worked on Chicago Pile One, the first-ever nuclear reactor. He spoke without benefit of a PowerPoint presentation, unlike many of the week's lecturers.

"[This will be] an inkling of what things were like in the 1930s and early 40s," he said. "The world was not a pretty place at that time ... the world of physics was a small world at that time."

In his closing remarks, Idaho State University's George Imel said he hoped some of the workshop's younger participants were inspired by the new things they had learned and also by Nyer's remarks.

"It's so important to have that legacy," he said.

In the meantime, the conference's participants can take away more immediate benefits.

"It is interesting to come here," said Rene Van Gemeert, who came from Germany to attend the conference. "I've gotten some confirmations of ideas I had myself."

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Keynote speaker Warren Nyer speaks to the V&V conference. Nyer is one of the last surviving members of the research teams that worked on the Manhattan Project and Chicago Pile One.